

# WOBBLY WHEELS

Darebin BUG Mid-week Riders' Blog



## WATTLE PARK 2 MARCH

It started out as just another ride, no one could have for-seen what the cruel hand of fate had in store for us that day. As the last of the summer sun cast majestic shadows on the world class monument that is the Westgarth toilet block 23 boomers set off - Roger as first mate at the rear....

With courage and exceptional navigation skills we soon entered the wilds of Darebin Creek, where rumours of a Black Panther sighting put us all on high alert. To the left, going down the hill a sudden movement in the bushes, a scream from someone behind as a creature leapt out in front of us. No not a Panther after all, but a very angry rabbit, close call there folks.

Morning Tea at Frog Hollow, lunch at Wattle Park. No one lost as yet and all going to plan.....until the cruel hand of fate crashed down at the chocolate shop afternoon tea stop.



For 10km I had been dreaming of a double ice-cream iced chocolate, covered with chocolate sprinkles – a delight for any weary traveller. But

with horror worthy of a Stephen King novel folks, the orders were so mixed up by a rather new waitress and instead a luke warm coffee was presented...why can life be so cruel?

Back to home again, a lovely 54km ride with lovely people, a magnificent day out and to this day we are all still wondering .... Was that shadow in the bush just an old rubbish bag or could it have been the lair of the fabled Black Panther of Alphington – Believe it or Not.

Allan Martin

## AQUEDUCT TRAIL 4 MARCH

We had four starters and George had let me know that he would meet us at Possum Park. Russell was a recent member and I had not met him before.

We reached Possum Park in good time and George was waiting.



After morning tea, we continued to Eltham for lunch. Continuing on the Diamond Creek Trail, I nearly took the wrong turn at Edendale Farm. Others also took the wrong turn and we waited for

them to catch up. The slow hill to Research was climbed and we were on the Aqueduct Trail. A few riders had to walk the steep part, getting stuck behind Bruce. We finally reached the Diamond Creek Rotary Tram café and took our afternoon tea.



The nearby playground is extensive with wooden structures and sculptures.



The sculptures appealed to the group: the platypus and the gold prospector.



We rode on to Diamond Creek station where four took the train and I rode home. 35 km.

David

## **TUNSTALL SQUARE**

### **SATURDAY 6 MARCH**

First ride of the month, we decided to ride to Tunstall Square. From past experience I decided to carry a spare battery for one of the riders, as the undulating trail, took its toll on the available charge.

At Rushall I discovered I had come without a helmet but a quick phone call, and I would pick one up at my brother's place. Come go time and we all headed off except me, who was supposed to riding tail. I had no battery power. The group now stopped by phone call, waited while I did a quick elementary fault finding exercise. Decided the fault must be in the battery socket and I was without the battery key to remove said battery. So all the riders headed off under George's stewardship.



I headed home rectified the fault, grabbed a helmet and drove to Darebin wetlands and chased the group. Two more riders had by this time also joined the group.

Having applied myself to catch up, I was somewhat disappointed that I hadn't caught up by Doncaster. There I received a text from George that he was just leaving Hay's Paddock. He had taken the advice from Wobbly Wheels and avoided the Kew Golf Course hill and I, having not read his email, sailed by.

Now having rejoined the ride, I discovered my wife's battery was showing signs of imminent exhaustion, so I assisted her up the hills, to coax her on to Tunstall Square.

Eventually we all arrived at our destination, without further drama. Coffees were purchased and the most popular food seemed to be from the sausage and bread stall. Barbara left us here and headed to the Nunawading Station. Faye and Christine with there near spent batteries, decided to await my return at Tunstall Square.

The rest headed back, with Costas and Alf leaving at Blackburn Road, to go to Blackburn Station. At Chandler Hwy, I swopped Kerrie's battery, as a precaution and I left the group at Wingrove Cres. to get my car and pick up Faye and Christine.

I am assured the remaining riders dropped off near their homes, or returned to Rushall without further incident

David Downing

## RUFFEY PARK LAKE 9 MARCH

It was very slightly drizzling with rain when the ten of us headed off towards the newish pop-up bike lane running along Heidelberg rd, from Clifton Hill to Fairfield. Responses were mixed about riding along busy Heidelberg Road. The pop-up lane is wide and well-marked but unfortunately doesn't go all the way to Chandler Highway. At the end of the pop-up section, we went up onto the footpath and then crossed at the pedestrian crossing and along the south side footpath. Not ideal but always interesting to try any new bike infrastructure even if it may be only temporary.

After some backtracking along the side streets, we eventually got across to the old Chandler Highway bridge and down onto the Yarra trail towards Willsmere Park. Up the short steep hill and onto the path next to the freeway. We had the first mechanical with a 'chain off' on the hill for Nola.

The drizzle had eased off a bit as we went through the bushland towards Yarra Flats. There was hardly any wind and the bushland smelled very fresh from the rain. It was turning out to be a lovely morning.

At Possum Park, Warringal parklands we stopped for our morning break. The good thing was there was no dust flying up along the Yarra Flats path but most of us had stripes of mud and grit up our backs and our bikes were covered as well. Ever hopeful we thought would have a dry ride for the next section as the drizzle had eased off.

Along the Yarra trail towards the Banyule swamp, we had to slow down to avoid a large flock of ducks that were walking along the path. We added some duck droppings to our grit and grime.

At the Ruffey Trail Suspension Bridge at Templestowe we crossed over the Yarra to Wombat Bend. To the left is the start of the creek trail. The drizzle still held off and the bushland still smelt fresh. We got to Ruffey Lake Park a little too early for lunch, so we decided to circuit the lake a bit. I started to think that Jopie and Ian H were leading me and the group on a bit of a wild goose chase as we pushed up slope after slope to circuit the lake. It's a very hilly park. There were some shouts from the group that we must to be lost. Only slightly lost. I resisted any more side tracking and we continued to our lunch spot in the park. There is now a very new toilet block and plenty of seating under shelter there.



After lunch we rode through the hilly back streets towards Doncaster Road. We crossed over and rode downhill down Whitten's lane to get onto the Koonung path north side. Crossing over the freeway we rode towards the Chocolate shop for afternoon tea.

There was a second and third 'chain off' at some stage during the day but the main mechanical was at the Chocolate shop. Ian H came out to find his bike had a flat back tyre.



I'm sure there is probably a good joke around how many cyclists does it take to change a tyre. On this occasion there seemed to be at least four. Plus many onlookers watching progress, including some random people walking past.

Oh no! the patched tube had immediately gone flat. It can happen to the best of us and so the tyre team had to start again. This time a new inner tube was used and pumped up. Another very quick change and all was well a second time. The tyre held its air this time and happily the group rode off to go back to Westgarth. Ian H has been having bad luck with punctures lately as these made three.

Distance 44km

Regards

Sue Hiscock

## CHERRY LAKE 11 MARCH

It was a lovely crisp Autumn morning when we assembled for our ride.

Six riders set off; myself, Bruce, Roger, Ian Hamilton, David, and a new rider Russell.

We had an uneventful ride along the Inner Circle path through Nth Fitzroy and into Princes Park.

Leaving Princes Park, heading towards Royal Park Station we came across a detour part way down the hill that caused us to travel across the parkland and onto Poplar Road. Not sure what works were being undertaken.

After crossing the railway line we rejoined the bike path and headed towards Flemington Bridge.

We made our way along the Moonee Ponds Trail under City Link to Footscray Road.

I can report that little progress has been made on the new toll road above Footscray road since I was last there.

We all admired the new helicopter for Emergency Services Victoria that was parked in the container yard of the docks, presumably having just been unloaded from a ship.

Morning tea was in Yarraville Gardens.

After morning tea we rode down Hyde Street and onto the Bay Trail at Westgate Bridge. We took the Bay trail beside the river towards Williamstown. We all remarked on the large number of fishermen out enjoying the sunshine along this section. As usual, they did not seem to be catching many fish.

From Nelson Place, Williamstown we continued on the Bay Trail towards Williamstown Beach. The water was dead flat, not a breath of wind, bright and sunny. I have rarely seen the sea so lovely.

We continued through Jawbone reserve and beside the Kororoit Creek to Cherry Lake.

After lunch we headed down Pier Street to the beach. Much of Pier Street has been closed off and set up for outdoor dining, very European. We rode along the foreshore past the boat ramp and the dog beach where dozens of dogs were having fun on a sunny day on the beach and in the water.



At the end of the esplanade we rode around the southern perimeter of the coastal park past the remains of the old race course before rejoining the Bay Trail at Kororoit Creek.

Arriving at Kororoit Creek Road, rather than continuing on the Bay Trail, we crossed onto Maddox Street. We had some road works to contend with as we made our way along Maddox Street. After crossing the railway line we turned right and headed through the streets to Newport Station, where David left us to get the train home.

From there we turned and went down Elphin Street to Douglas Parade. Crossing Douglas Parade we made our way through the parkland back to the Bay Trail beside the river. We made our way up the Bay Trail and along Hyde Street to the Yarraville Garden. After crossing Somerville Road, a we continued along Hyde Street to Footscray Station. From there we continued on to the Footscray Arts Centre. Here we had a discussion about where to have afternoon tea. We agreed it was too early and that it should be nearer to Jaka.

As Russell wanted to take some photos around the docks area, we turned right at the bottom of the steep hill beside the Arts Centre going down to the river and made our way back to Footscray Road.

Along Footscray Road Russell left us to take his photos. We continued along Moonee Ponds Trail and inner Circle Trail to Northcote.

Back in Northcote we needed to decide on our afternoon tea location. The choice was either Phil's Bakery or Four Beans, the vote was in favour of Four Beans, one dissenting vote. However, Roger did concede that the iced chocolate he had was very nice.

We had a very good day, travelling about 65 km.  
Andrew

## SATURDAY 13 MARCH



Forecast for Saturday was not too promising, with 26deg. and 90% chance of rain, in the early morning, the afternoon and the evening. Which left, hopefully, an opening for a dry ride, in between. The ride being the regular Rushall to Beacon Cove and return.

Six riders turned up at Rushall Station to ride and we were very pleasantly surprised to be joined by Octavio and Aida, whom we hadn't seen in some time. Octavio has been laid up by a series of serious medical problems. Fortunately, modern medicine came to his aid and he should be able to join us after some convalescing.



*No, not one of our riders*

We headed off and were joined at Royal Park by Alf and Roy, making it now a group of 8 riders.

We had an uneventful ride to Caps in Port Melbourne where we had our refreshment break. At Caps we were joined by Reg, not in his riding togs, for he had come from a penant shooting session at the Todd Road rifle range. We were also joined by Sandra, who stayed with us as far as Jolimont.



### *Regrouping at Beacon Cove*

Riding back, we slowly glided through South Bank, keeping in mind the potential \$1600 fine if we were caught exceeding 10kph (I personally don't believe the fine, think its press hyperbole).

On the return journey we were occasionally hit by a blob of rain but nothing caused anyone to reach for a shower jacket. All safely back at Rushall. About an hour later the skies opened up in a tropical downpour.

David Downing

## WARBURTON TRAIL 16 MARCH

I agreed to take over the ride from Paul as cataract surgery prevented him from riding for a while. Ten riders notified me by the night before and thirteen arrived ready to ride. Roger took the train, leaving home at 4 am. He sent me a text at 7.08 informing me that he had left Flinders Street and another before I left home at 8.05 to tell me that he had ridden out of Lilydale.

Armed with this essential information, I arrived at the starting point at 9.30. It was not long before everyone was unpacked and ready and we made an early departure at 9.45.

I stopped at the Seville Carriage café to make sure of afternoon tea while the group rode on. Usually they are very relaxed but this time the young woman was adamant that they closed at 3 pm whatever. I agreed that we would be there by two and regretted it later.

I caught the group before they reached the tea stop, which seemed further than I remember.

We had a relaxed tea then continued to Warburton arriving around 12. Our usual table was occupied so we took over others nearer to the toilets. Warburton is as picturesque as ever, and we relaxed by the sound of the Yarra flowing downstream,



We set off after lunch about 12.30 and made good time. After Woori Yallock, Michael caught up with me to say that Chris had a puncture and was fixing it and that we should ride on to tea.

I then had a phone call from Ralph, which I could not answer and replied having to leave a message. I then got a message from Ralph

We arrived at the Carriage Café just after 2 pm to find a reserved table.

Ralph, Nola and Chris arrived about 15 minutes or so later and Chris was unhappy with his repair and proceeded to replace the tube with help from Roger and Michael.





After tea and repairs were finished, we returned to the car park. Ralph and Nola's friends who live nearby, had attached balloons to their car but fortunately no paint or tin cans.



An enjoyable 56 km in perfect weather, warming just a little in the afternoon.

David

### **CAPITAL CITY TRAIL 18 MARCH**

All aboard for the easy Capital City Trail and gardens ride. Four riders set off a bit late after an early morning chat and examination of Rogers battle wounds after more entanglement with his bike. It was a fine morning for a ride with no wind and an ideal temperature for riding.

Just after the Koonda Lat we met Roberta cycling towards us oblivious of the 9 am start so she happily turned around and joined the ride along the trail.

In the city near docklands riders opinions were sought about where to have the morning stop and the general consensus was that we should stop at the bot gardens. So on we pedalled though over Jim Stynes Bridge and then all apart from Bruce rode very slowly along Southbank to avoid the \$1600 speeding fines.

We then ventured through the Alexandra gardens and the Queen Victoria Rose gardens and did a lap around the statue of the old queen, before heading around the tan and through the Kings domain gardens (near the music bowl) and into the gardens near the herbarium. In the gardens we walked past the fallen oak tree which has been converted into seats and an education area.



Source <http://roadsideikebana.blogspot.com>

Luckily the walk to the lakeside seating was downhill and riders marvelled and the lovely gardens and tested their botanical knowledge of some of the plants we walked past. At the normal stop the cafe was closed and there were no seats at the tables so we sat on the concrete borders for the traditional morning tea stop.

Back on the bikes we rode on the bike path to Como and strolled around the gardens, where we were invited to join the working bee in the vegetable gardens. They would welcome any interested person to volunteer helping with the gardening and the meet every Thursday from 10 – 12.



*Intrepid riders at Como*

After Como we rode on to the Kevin Bartlett reserve for lunch then strolled around the Burnley gardens trying to identify more plants. The gardens looked lovely on this visit.

The afternoon tea stop was at the Abbotsford convent but Roger could not find an iced chocolate made with icecream so he headed off for home while the remaining riders sat in the quiet convent courtyard for more chatting. The exhibition inside was called *Flesh after Fifty* and *"This groundbreaking exhibition will explore and challenge negative stereotypes of aging while celebrating and promoting positive images of older women through art"*. (Source <https://abbotsfordconvent.com.au>)

Finally it was back on the bikes again and riding through the streets of Clifton hill back to the start. Total ride about 35km.

Ed

## SATURDAY 20 MARCH

Today's ride was our usual Rushall to Port Melbourne and return. An overcast day with a maximum of 26 deg. was forecast but it turned out to be clear skies with a few whisks of cloud about. Nine riders turned up at the start; Bruce was not included as he was only there to wave us goodbye as he had better things to do. Also a potential new rider arrived to look us over and discuss riding with us.

The group headed off a little after 9.30 in fine form until we came across the path works near the Zoo. The detour was very poorly defined, riders rode on the grass, on the road, through the Zoo car park and we all joined up with Costas and Alf who were waiting at our regrouping point at Royal Park. An uneventful but pleasant ride got us all to Caps at Port Melbourne for our refreshment break.



*Setting off after regrouping at Harbour City*

At Caps we were joined once again by Reg not in his riding gear, but fresh from target shooting at the Todd Rd venue. Joining us also was Sandra who left us, on our return ride, at the MCG.

We regrouped at Beacon Cove for the return ride, where I as supposed to canvas the idea of riding on the North Bank of the Yarra as opposed to the 10 kph South Bank but I forgot. Off we went, then I remembered; but by this time the group had spread out. George headed forward to get the lead riders to cross the river at Spencer St. While I got the rest, to turn west at the tram depot and head through the car park along the marked cycle path. Alas the path was indistinct or I was blasé, we ended up trying to ride into DFO's car park. Eventually we found the trail marks and got ourselves to the West of Seaman's Bridge and there crossed over to the North Bank.

I hadn't been this way for some time, it having changed a lot and rather enjoyed what was novel to me. At Spencer St, we all joined up and rode to Birrarung Marr. Here we split into two groups some going over the rail yards to the west side of the MCG and the rest riding past AAMI and up the ramp to the south of the MCG. All riders joined up at the top of Jolimont Terrace for the ride back to Rushall. Back a little later than usual, we were able to share a few words with Ed Smart who happened to be riding by.

David Downing

### **DJERRING TRAIL 23 MARCH**

Slight confusion at the start of the ride as the ride leader had been notified that the ride starting time had been changed to 9.30 but unfortunately only the ride planning group were aware of the change so 5 riders were waiting at the rendezvous point wondering where the leader was. Luckily, I live close by, so after a call from Ed was able to get there in no time. We did have to wait for Pam, Paul, Ralph and Nola to arrive as they were also in the know re the change of starting time.

The leader's suggestion to a shorter ride given possible rain was roundly rejected by the 9 keen riders, so we headed off for the planned ride. The ride to Kew was uneventual and we arrived at Frogs Hollow for morning tea where the seats were relatively dry. Wet weather gear was stripped off as the day was quite humid and sweating rather than rain was the problem.

Good to see they have finally finished the reconstruction through the park to Hughesdale and soon we were on the Djerring trail. We made a good pace given the still conditions and lunch was had in Elwood Park. We rode back along a deserted St Kilda beach – the pavement has never been this quiet before.

The surprise at afternoon tea was that Roger ordered a very green smoothie to the amazement of all present. However, after one sip he took it back saying it was undrinkable – way too healthy an option.

Rode home via Edinburgh Gardens where we said goodbye to Sue. Ian S and Ed soon departed as well. We were home by 3.30 having done 54 kms and not having a drop of rain for the duration of the ride.

Glenys

## **GASWORKS PARK 25 MARCH**

Believe it or not, we had four starters. We had had drizzle all night so it was very wet at starting time. I thought maybe no riders today but it finished up with no rain, no wind and good riding conditions.

Roger, George, Roy and myself set off, three of us with E Bikes. Roy does have one but he chose a normal bike for today's ride.

The destination was Gasworks Park for lunch. There was a detour outside the zoo. A new footpath was going in. We did not take the detour. I did some walking but the rest rode all the way past. At the end you had to lift your bike over the fence. No good for trikes. Roy had done the detour before, he claims it put 2 km extra on the trip.

We had no worries on the path under the freeway. To my surprise no pools. We had a tail wind along from Port Melbourne to near St Kilda pier where we headed east. Then we went north to Gasworks Park. Near the café, we stopped to view a funny statue (or crazy) before lunch at the usual place. The park has been in the news of late with school kids taking it over being noisy and leaving rubbish behind. We enjoyed lunch with a couple of dogs wanting crumbs.

Just as we were leaving, kids started swamping in. Into town, Roger took over the lead and led us up Swanston St into La Trobe where he intended showing Weather Bureau Ex Headquarters.

That was blocked so we went back to La Trobe St, along Westgarth St, past Carol's and back to the start.

Distance 34 km.

Bruce.

## SATURDAY 27 MARCH

The forecast for this Saturday was a dismal 90% chance of rain. At about 8.30 am the skies opened up and we had a heavy downpour but the radar indicated that there would not be much rain after it passed. Come 9.30 six riders had turned up. Having been warned by Bruce, that the detour in the Royal Park area was untenable for trikes and a problem for two wheel riders, I suggested that we detour at the Upfield Path, then into Park Street, down the hill and then follow the cycle path, along side the tram track to our usual grouping point near the Zoo.

Off we went, the group being broken up by traffic lights along the way. When we passed under Royal Parade, I noticed that the cyclist ahead, didn't take the turn at the Upfield Path. I turned here and headed to the grouping point at Royal Park. When I arrived I was on my own, until shortly after, I was joined by Costas, who had come directly from his home. Shortly after the rest of the group turned up along the tramway path, including Roy, who now made it a group of eight.

*Jim Stynes Bridge*

*To ride or not to ride, that is the question!*



North bank, over the William Barak Bridge to the MCG, where Sandra left us.

Nice and warm now, outer garments were shed and we peddled to Rushall Station, in lovely sunshine.

The sky was overcast and I think I detected two large drops of rain. We pressed on to Caps at Port Melbourne and were joined by Sandra at Westgate Park, who was our ninth rider



*HMAS ?*

During our "Caps" break, the sun came out and the clouds dissipated. We took off and noticed an unusual naval vessel at Station Pier.

We decided not to ride Southbank and under Georges direction, we headed to the Seafarers Bridge (without going through DFO's car park). Crossed over, rode the North bank, over the William Barak Bridge to the MCG, where Sandra left us.

Nice and warm now, outer garments were shed and we peddled to Rushall Station, in lovely sunshine.

David Downing

### **PLENTY RIVER RIDE 30 MARCH**

A call to Ralph on Monday from Allan, informing him that Kathy was in hospital with a medical issue, led to a leader change and an announcement before we all set off. Ralph decided to change the morning tea venue to Norris Bank Park. With a little muttering from the gallery as to why the starting place was changing from next week, we explained it was the ride planning committee's suggestion. We stopped in South Crescent to point out where it was and to show its proximity to Jika for the toilet and the first aid kit.

Fifteen riders headed off towards the Darebin trail with Ralph leading and Paul on tail. A fairly incident free ride until the hill after Bell Street, where Pam's chain came off and the group paused at the top for a breather. Here I noticed that Susan and David had joined in somewhere – it was lovely to see them on a Tuesday after quite some time. The new part of the trail after Murray Road was very impressive – a lot of work was done on this section last year. The sun was out and it was a very pleasant day for cycling.

Morning tea was a social affair as normal. People enjoyed catching up on each other's news and plans for the coming Easter break. We even spotted a couple of our neighbours there with their little granddaughter. It does take a while to round up 17 riders, but we eventually left for the Ring Road. To avoid the doozy of a hill that goes up to Plenty Road, we turned left at the Ring Rd riding to Murchison Way. Here Andrew left for home and we went north to McKimmies Rd, where we turned

right. People enjoyed the ride through RMIT. Pam said it was very different to when she worked there many years ago and a couple of people remembered it being called Preston Tech or Phillip Institute of Technology, fondly referred to as PIT.

Now on Plenty Rd bike path riding south, we returned to the Ring travelling east to Macorna St Bridge. Imagine our surprise to see a burning flame about 20cm long as if it had been thrown there! We cycled quickly passed away from any danger. Next followed some lovely downhill rolls in Sellars St to the underpass and soon we were at our lunch venue, Kalparrin Gardens. Roberta was waiting for us here. She had been to Bundoora Park for morning tea and rode on hoping to meet us at lunch. Workmen were busy at the picnic area so most of us moved 50 metres away sitting on the grass under the shade of trees.

Once on our way again, Ed was able to guide us under the Diamond Creek Rd Bridge and this part of the trail really needs some work – very narrow, bumpy and lots of tree roots. After Lower Plenty Rd, Paul took the lead with Ian on tail, to take us on an easier route back to the Yarra trail than the hilly gravel one. Yes there were a couple of hills, but more manageable on bitumen and the reward was the wonderful downhill section in Banyule Road, after which we were back on the Yarra trail and Ralph returned as leader. Around the Banyule football ground Ian H had another flat tyre, which caused a group to stop and offer assistance, while the rest of us continued on, hoping to make it to the Alphington Food Store before they closed at 3pm. I say another as we had

the chocolate shop incident a couple of weeks back with Ian and his same tyre!

Eight of us arrived at the preferred coffee venue around 2.45 to find it closed. Messages were left for Paul and Ian to spread the word we were off to Niko's opposite Fairfield station. Fortunately there were seats outside with umbrellas, as it is very noisy inside. The other half of the group soon arrived to enjoy a coffee and chat after a lovely ride. Ian H decided he needed a new tyre and skipped the coffee. As we were travelling by train, around 3.30, we bid our farewells and walked onto the station. It wasn't until we alighted at Watsonia that Ralph realised he'd left his drink bottle on the table. He noticed a missed call from Ian S so he phoned back and could here chuckling in the background. It seems he does need Ian to ask him if he's forgotten anything, as this is certainly not the first drink bottle occurrence!

*Report by Nola*